TRAINING

SELF-DEVELOPMENT DOMAIN

According to TRADOC, the self-development domain of the NCO leader development strategy must contain structure in order to bridge the gaps between the operational and institutional domains, and foster Soldiers' career-long learning. A five-level structured self-development program (SSDP) is currently under construction. The program's curriculum is designed to compliment the other two parts of the self-development domain – guided and personal self development – and directly ties the domain to the ultimate goal of NCOES transformation; to produce warrior leaders who are critical thinkers and resource managers.

Warrior University & Army Career Tracker

The *Warrior University* online portal will serve as a professional "home" for Soldiers and leaders to facilitate and foster lifelong learning. Its mission will be to synchronize and integrate all training so Soldiers are aware of new systems and lessons learned and receive the appropriate training, regardless of their physical location.
The *Army Career Tracker* is a career management tool that combines training, assignment history, and formal/informal education, enabling Soldiers to holistically manage their career-long learning. ACT also serves as a tool for supervisors and commanders to counsel and effectively lead their Soldiers and units. Soldiers and supervisors will soon be able to access Warrior University and their personalized Army Career Tracker through AKO.

Structured Self-Development Program 1

The Army is working to establish SSDP 1. The computer-based training will consist of 80 hours of online interactive multimedia instruction via Black Board. DOTD has currently validated 40 of those hours. TRADOC states SSDP 1's completion and phase-in during Fiscal 09, followed by SSDP 1 becoming a requirement for Warrior Leader Course graduation by fiscal 10 and a prerequisite for WLC enrollment by FY 11. The intent is for Soldiers to self-enroll after graduating Initial Entry Training.

SSDP 2

Upon validation, SSDP 2 will include 80 hours of online interactive multimedia instruction via Black Board, to be completed after Warrior Leader Course and prior to attending the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (Advanced Leader Course).

SSDP 3

Upon validation, SSDP 3 will follow the same format as SSDP 1 and 2. It will be completed after the Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (Advanced Leader Course), but prior to attending the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (Senior Leader Course).

SSDP 4

NCOs will complete the future validated SSDP 4 after attending the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course (Senior Leader Course), but prior to attending the Sergeants Major Course. SSDP 4 will also absorb some of the critical tasks from the First Sergeant Course as it dissolves.

SSDP 5

NCOs will complete future validated SSDP 5 after graduating from the Sergeants Major Course. Upon completion of SSDP 5, senior NCOs will have achieved all levels of the the career-long Structured Self-Development Program.

OPERATIONAL DOMAIN

Assignment experience and real world problem solving feed the operational domain of the NCO leader development strategy. The Army's current operations tempo continues to provide NCOs opportunities to develop their leadership abilities. More and more NCOs are stepping up and assuming the responsibilities and missions traditionally expected of the ranks above them. Recognizing this trend, NCOES transformation is focusing on accelerating NCO development by migrating training tasks downward in the self-development and institutional domains to ensure NCOs receive the maximum amount of training on a position prior to holding that position.

Warrior Leader Course

The Warrior Leader Course is currently undergoing a total redesign led by USASMA. In addition to transitioning in SSDP 1 completion as a prerequisite for attending WLC, the Army is also migrating relevant tasks from the current Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course (Advanced Leader Course) curriculum. The redesigned WLC will prepare specialists and corporals for success at both team and squad levels, with selected team-level tasks covered via SSDP 1. The Army has also employed WLC Mobile Training Teams to reduce the backlog of redeploying NCOs awaiting the course.

Advanced Leader Course

The Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course will soon be renamed the Advanced Leader Course (ALC). The course's two phases are currently being refocused to include select tasks now covered in the Advanced Noncommissioned Officer curriculum, with the intent of preparing sergeants and staff sergeants for positions at the squad, section and platoon levels. The ALC Phase 1/ Common Core curriculum will be primarily delivered through computer-based training and complimented by the training provided in SSDP 2. This common core conversion is scheduled to complete the testing phase in August, with fiscal 09 serving as a transition year, and fiscal 10 as the target for fully implementing the Web-based delivery while maintaining the Video Tele-Training capabilities, with both provided by USASMA. ALC Phase II will continue to provide MOS-specific training, but TRADOC is attempting to reduce the training to 8 weeks or less where possible and adjust class dates for low density MOSs to align with redeployment resets.

Senior Leader Course

The Advanced Noncommissioned Officer Course will soon be renamed the Senior Leader Course (SLC), and its curriculum is being refocused to develop sergeants' first class and master sergeants' MOS technical skills at both platoon and company levels. Within the next two training years, the Army will develop SSDP 5, which will become a prerequisite for attending SLC. TRADOC is attempting to reduce the training to 8 weeks or less where possible. The SLC will join SSDP 4 in absorbing selected tasks from the First Sergeant Course in order to prepare sergeants first class for duty assignments as first sergeants.

First Sergeant Course

The revised First Sergeant Course curriculum was implemented in January. Phase I now consists of 58 hours of online instruction. Field stakeholders have been assisting USASMA in selected critical tasks that will be migrated to the Senior Leader Course and SSDP 4, in preparation for the First Sergeant Course going away in the near future.

Senior Staff NCO Course

NEW functional course still under construction. Similar to Battle Staff NCO Course but designed to provide sergeants first class through sergeants major with staff skills for assignments above the brigade-level.

Sergeants Major Course

USASMA is currently redesigning the nine-month long Sergeants Major Course and introducing Internet-based thin client computers into its SMC classrooms, which will allow the academy to leverage technology throughout the course. According to USASMA leadership, the SMC redesign is focused on synchronizing the course with the officer education system in order to produce graduates who better understand the Army's operational and strategic implications. SMC Class 59, which begins in August, will also receive at least 28 rewritten lessons. More changes are expected for Class 60, the first class to host all sergeant major selectees with no non-promotable master sergeants in attendance. The academy is also continuing its mission of aligning the Sergeants Major Nonresident Course curriculum as close as possible to the resident version of the course. The SMNRC has developed more than 200 hours of Web-based training in the last two years, and once completed, the course will have approximately 325 hours of on-line training delivered via the Army Learning Management System.

Battle Staff NCO Course

Continues to prepare NCOs for battle staff NCO assignments at the brigade-level. New Phase I courseware includes 22 lessons covering 75 hours of material and will be completed and fielded during the next training year.

College of the American Soldier

College of the American Soldier (CAS) works in conjunction with GoArmyEd and colleges that participate in the Career Noncommissioned Officer Degrees Program, to expand existing civilian education support for Soldiers and leaders. CAS is available to all NCOs at any point in their career. It awards maximum college credit for Army leadership schools based on completion of NCOES up to the Sergeant Major Course. The Army is continuing to work to expand the list of colleges participating in CAS.

INSTITUTIONAL DOMAIN

Soldiers receive the majority of their transitional and functional training via the institutional domain's NCOES courses, with each course designed to prepare NCOs for the leadership roles at their respective ranks. The Army is currently working to refocus the NCOES courses by merging and migrating tasks downward where appropriate, leveraging technology to increase training efficiency and availability, and synchronizing the five levels of the self-development program with the appropriate NCOES courses.

This graphic was produced based on information from the Army's Training and Doctrine Command, the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, the 2008 NCOES Commandants Conference and www.army.mil.